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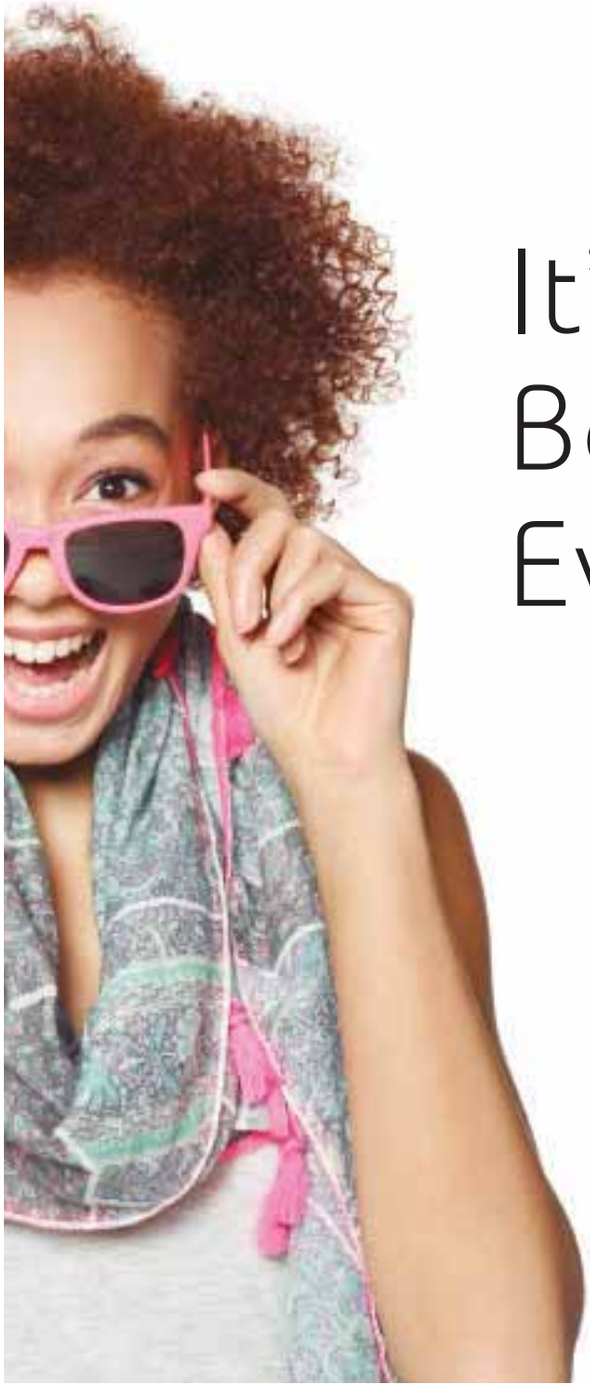

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OUTRAGE

WORLD REELS IN SHOCK OVER HEARTBREAKING IMAGES OF SCORES OF VICTIMS, MANY OF THEM CHILDREN, OF AN APPARENT NERVE-GAS ATTACK IN SYRIA

PAGE 4

High price of health

A growing number of Canadians are travelling out of province for specialized care, at a steep price PAGES 6-7

Saskatchewan leads the way

It looks like the province is again at the head of the pack when it comes to average Canadian salaries PAGE 3

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Case adjourned in conservation officer's death

Defence. Lawyer says elevated charge of manslaughter adds complexity to case

MORGAN MODJESKI
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A 35-year-old man accused in the highway killing of a Saskatchewan environment and resource management officer is getting more time to decide on a plea to his manslaughter charge — a charge that his lawyer says is wrong for the circumstances of the fatal incident.

Blaine Taypotat, who made a brief appearance in Provincial Court on Wednesday, was originally facing a number of charges in the death of 23-year-old Justin Knackstedt, who was struck by a vehicle and killed in June while helping at the scene of an accident on Highway 11 just outside Saskatoon.

Those charges included dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death and impaired driving causing death. But in July, the charges were upgraded to include manslaughter.

Taypotat's lawyer, Donald Worme, said while his client is apologetic about the pain and trauma he has caused Knackstedt's family, further discussion is needed before they consider a plea.

"(The charge laid during) his last appearance has added a degree of complexity," Worme told reporters outside Saskatoon's Provincial Court on 19th Street East.

"That certainly requires the additional time to be taken so we can do a proper investigation, so we can review the disclosure documents that have been provided to us so we can advise our client and he can make the best decision given all of the tragic circumstances."

When asked about the elevated charge of manslaughter, Worme said the original charges are more suitable.

"I certainly do not agree that was the appropriate charge and circumstance," he said, "but that's a matter of Crown discretion and it's a matter that we will — if instructed — take up with the court at an appropriate time.

"From Day 1, he has been anxious to deal with this," Worme added of Taypotat.

"He has been extremely remorseful, he realizes that he has ... been involved with a loss of life and for any person, any right-thinking person, that's going to be troubling — and certainly it is for our client."

Taypotat has been remanded until his next court appearance, scheduled for Sept. 24.

STRIKING A POSE

Benji, a 23-year-old contortionist, performs at Circus Gatti — also known as the Fire Fighters Circus — on Wednesday night at Credit Union Centre. The show, also running on Thursday night, marks the 44th year that Circus Gatti has come to Saskatoon in collaboration with the Saskatoon Fire Fighters Association. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

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Tatiana Maslany

Sask. actress to go on Parks and Rec

The shine keeps getting brighter for Regina-born actress Tatiana Maslany.

The 27-year-old, who caught Hollywood's eye with her multi-character role in Space Channel's Orphan Black, is joining the cast of NBC's Parks and Recreation for a two-episode stint.

Maslany — who was once a part of Regina's General Fools improv comedy troupe — will be in the fifth and sixth episode of the sixth season of the comedy show as a love interest for character Tom Haverford.

Already this year, Maslany has won a Television Critics Association Award for her performance in Orphan Black, and the lack of an Emmy nomination for the role was called a snub. METRO

Dubbing structures

Head of naming review named

The Saskatchewan government has appointed former lieutenant-governor Gordon Barnhart to head a review of the way names are selected for provincially owned buildings and geographic "features."

The province said Wednesday that the review would look to "modernize" the current naming policy and should be submitted to cabinet by Dec. 31.

Premier Brad Wall said he supports scrapping a provision that prohibits naming buildings after people who are still alive.

"They should be able to enjoy the honour if the province decides to name something for someone because of what they contributed," he said. MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

$17.5B so far in 2013

Exports on track for another record

Provincial exports increased by 4.3 per cent in the first half of 2013, putting Saskatchewan on pace to surpass its yearly export record set last year, the government said Wednesday. The province has sold $17.5 billion so far.

MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

Saskatchewan's wage gauge still on the rise, survey says

3.4 per cent increase predicted for coming year. Growth primarily focused on potash, oil

JACOB MORGAN
saskatoon@metronews.ca

Saskatchewan workers might be the envy of their counterparts across Canada.

The Hay Group global consulting firm has released a survey forecasting average Canadian salaries in the coming year. And it looks like Saskatchewan is again at the head of the pack.

With a predicted average increase of 3.4 per cent in wages across the province, Saskatchewan is second only to Newfoundland, where workers are reaping the benefits of an offshore oil-and-gas boom.

"Saskatchewan has been coming out first or second or third in terms of pay increase levels for the last three or four years," said Nick Bishop, a Hay Group consultant.

"It's all based on the power and ... demand created through the resource industries."

Although the growth is primarily focused on the potash and oil sectors, Bishop said it has the potential to spread throughout the economy.

According to the survey, some of this year's highest increases are in oil and gas at four per cent, credit unions at 3.2 per cent and chemicals at 3.1 per cent.

For the trend to continue, Bishop explained, "it depends on what happens to the price of potash over the next year."

Perils of success

Kent Smith-Windsor, executive director of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, said the strong economy presents unique challenges.

- "As people increase their wages, the requirements for performance become that much greater," said Smith-Windsor.

According to a Hay Group survey, Saskatchewan wages should increase by 3.4 per cent in 2014. JEFF MACKEY/METRO FILE

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New hope in Cairo. Envoy says detained Canadians could be freed early

Two Canadians detained in Cairo remained behind bars Wednesday as an uneasy calm allowed the reopening of the Canadian embassy in the Egyptian capital.

Egypt's ambassador to Canada said Tarek Loubani and John Greyson could conceivably be freed before the end of the 15-day period that prosecutors said they were ordered detained.

"Technically it is possible, because these are maximum (detention) times allowed by the law," said ambassador Wael Aboulmagd.

"I think the first period will be four days, and then ... the prosecutor decides if he needs more time."

Aboulmagd stressed, however, that under Egypt's judicial system, he could not interfere in the process, and it would be entirely up to prosecutors to decide whether to release the men.

Loubani, a doctor from London, Ont., and Greyson, a Toronto filmmaker, were detained Friday by Egyptian police.

Friends and family say they were in Cairo after making an unsuccessful attempt to enter Gaza, where Loubani teaches emergency medicine and Greyson was exploring the prospects of making a documentary.

Canadian consular officials were expected to meet with the two men Thursday.

The public prosecutor's office in Cairo says the men face a range of accusations, including threatening security and social peace and possessing ammunition and explosives.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Flood of support

600

The Egyptian embassy in Ottawa has received more than 600 emails and phone calls from supporters of the two Canadians since their detention in Cairo.

Road rage. Chinese bus driver takes the angry route, plows into a crowd

A Chinese bus driver angry over being punished by his company drove a bus into a pack of bicyclists and motorcyclists on Wednesday.

Twenty-seven people were injured, reports said.

The bus driver — identified only by his surname Li — previously had been fined about $32 by his company for exceeding the speed limit and put on leave after he refused to write a self-criticism letter.

So the upset driver took an empty bus, which he plowed into people in the southern Chinese city of Shunde in Guangdong province.

Xinhua said Li slammed into one motorbike, 10 mopeds and five bicycles. Of the injured, two were in serious condition.

Li was detained by police on charges of endangering public safety.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gunmen strike

Drive-by attack kills politician

Gunmen shot and killed a Swedish politician and wounded another in a drive-by shooting Wednesday in Mogadishu, said police in Somalia.

Killed was Abdirahim Hassan, 24, a member of the youth wing of Sweden's Left Party. Ann-Margarethe Livh, a group leader for the Left Party, was injured.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Argentina offers cash

Inmates' tunnel leads to freedom

Argentina has replaced its prisons chief and offered an $89,000 reward for help capturing 11 dangerous inmates who tunnelled out of a maximum-security prison in a Buenos Aires' suburb.

Thirteen inmates escaped Tuesday by digging through solid concrete. By late Wednesday, only two had been captured.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Citizen journalism: This photo from a usually reliable source is said to show the tragic aftermath of a purported toxic gas attack in Damascus, Syria. A woman is supported as she mourns over the bodies of children on Wednesday. LOCAL COMMITTEE OF ARBEEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Little children die: Did Syria use gas?

Alleged atrocity. Syrian activists claim 100 died in toxic attack in Damascus — a report that has shocked the world

Anti-government activists Wednesday accused the Syrian regime of carrying out a toxic gas attack that killed at least 100 people, including many children as they slept.

The purported attack happened during artillery and rocket barrages on the eastern suburbs of Damascus.

Shocking images emerged, showing pale, lifeless bodies of children lined up on floors of makeshift hospitals and others with oxygen masks on their faces as they were attended to by paramedics.

One appeared to be a toddler clad in diapers.

An activist said bodies of 63 of the dead had indications of a chemical weapons attack but he could not confirm this.

"Their mouths were foaming, their pupils were constricted, and those who were brought in while still alive could not draw their breaths and died subsequently," he said.

The Syrian regime called claims of the attack "absolutely baseless." Syria's ally, Russia, described the reports as "alarmist."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"Such an attack is completely unacceptable and we call on the ... regime to co-operate with the UN officials investigating these disturbing reports."

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, who says Ottawa will continue to monitor the situation in Syria closely

UN chief 'shocked'

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he is determined to ensure a "thorough investigation" into the reports of a deadly toxic gas attack by the Syrian regime.

UN deputy spokesperson Eduardo del Buey said the secretary-general is "shocked" at Wednesday's alleged use of chemical weapons in the eastern suburbs of Damascus.

But President Bashar Assad's regime denied using chemical weapons.

However, a letter drafted by Britain and France has been sent to the secretary-general requesting that the team launch "an urgent investigation ... as expeditiously as possible."

More than half a dozen other countries — including the United States, Australia, Luxembourg and Germany — also signed the two nations' letter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

His message is clear: A Syrian man who lives in Beirut holds up a placard during a Beirut protest over the alleged toxic gas attack in Damascus. HUSSEIN MALLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vancouver man sued by U.S. grocery giant

Pirating Trader Joe's?
American company alleges business owner's actions harm their brand

Pirate Joe's owner Michael Hallatt poses for a photograph at his store, where he resells products from the U.S. specialty grocery store Trader Joe's, in Vancouver, on Wednesday. Trader Joe's has filed a lawsuit against Hallatt in Washington State Federal Court alleging federal trademark infringement, false advertising and false endorsement. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Michael Hallatt has never worked harder for what he says is less money, reselling someone else's products.

For a year and a half, Hallatt has made trips across the border, spending almost $350,000 stocking up on goods at U.S. grocery giant Trader Joe's, and then reselling them at his Vancouver store, Pirate Joe's.

The shelves of Pirate Joe's are lined with everything from canned goods and cereals to baking mixes and pasta sauces, all bearing Trader Joe's federally registered trademark logo.

Now, Hallatt has been slapped with a lawsuit by the U.S. retailer, alleging trademark infringement, false advertising, and other things that it says hurt the company's brand.

The lawsuit, filed in May, alleges that not only is Hallatt not authorized to resell Trader Joe's products, he is misleading people by dressing up the shop in a way that looks similar to the U.S. stores.

Hallatt maintains that everything he is doing is legal.

"I knew there would be legal jeopardy, but I knew I was operating within my legal right, so I decided I would defend myself if it came down to it, and it did," he said Wednesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Inquiry. Queue-jumping found to have occurred in Alta. health-care system

An inquiry has found that queue-jumping has occurred in Alberta's health-care system and that an environment exists in which it could happen again.

Justice John Vertes says while claims that queue-jumping was widespread and that politicians were moving people to the front of the line ended up being untrue, there were instances in which people got faster care. He said policies need to be tightened.

"The claim that it was not uncommon for senior executives to receive requests for expedited care proved to be unfounded," Vertes wrote in his final report, released Wednesday. "However ... the inquiry did in fact learn of incidents of improper preferential access and also identified several systemic issues that could foster an environment conducive to such improper access."

Vertes made a total of 12 recommendations to help prevent abuses in the province's $16-billion health-care system.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Two-month update

More than 14,500 homes damaged in Alberta floods

The Alberta government says more than 14,500 homes were damaged during severe flooding in June.

It also says 2,700 people are still living in temporary housing, in hotels or with friends and family.

The figures are in a two-month flood update provided by the province.

More than 8,000 applications for disaster-recovery support are currently being processed, and payments totalling nearly $7 million have so far been made.

GLOBAL CALGARY/
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sen. Wallin on the hook for $139K after audit

Sen. Pamela Wallin's final bill is in — and it's a whopper.

The embattled Saskatchewan senator and former Conservative caucus member was informed Wednesday that she'll have to reimburse the Senate a grand total of $138,970 for ineligible travel expense claims.

Wallin was already on the hook for $121,348 after an independent audit of her travel expenses, released last week. The auditors advised another $21,000 in questionable claims should be reviewed by the Senate's internal economy committee.

Those claims involved travel to what the self-described "activist senator" deemed "networking events" and other special events, including speeches.

The committee concluded Wednesday that Wallin should pay back most of those additional claims, worth $17,622.

The decision comes as no surprise. Last week's audit report noted that the internal economy committee's steering committee had already reviewed Wallin's travel claims for so-called networking events and had concluded that "while occasional exceptional occurrences for special events might be acceptable, the volume and pattern of the events listed (by Wallin) would not qualify them as Senate business."

The audit report, which looked at Wallin's claims dating back to 2009, listed 13 networking events, which Wallin had described as primarily lunch or dinner meetings with unidentified representatives of the business, arts and charitable communities.

She also claimed expenses for attending a private dinner party in an individual's home, which "included senior members of the business and legal community" who discussed "a full range of issues."

And she claimed for attending a reception in a private home for an "internationally known individual ... historian, essayist, former dissident, public intellectual and editor of a newspaper" who had been involved in Poland's Solidarity movement.

Wallin has already reimbursed the Senate for $38,000 in ineligible travel claims and has promised to repay the rest once ordered to do so by the Senate, despite her insistence that the audit was "fundamentally flawed and unfair."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sen. Pamela Wallin speaks to reporters outside a Senate committee hearing on Parliament Hill in Ottawa last Monday. The embattled Saskatchewan senator and former Conservative caucus member has been ordered to pay back a grand total of $138,970. PATRICK DOYLE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Have illness, will travel

Medical tourism. Tens of thousands of critically ill Canadians pay hefty price for out-of-province cutting-edge care

MATT KIELTYKA
Metro in Vancouver

Mike Allan wasn't lucid enough even to count down the final days to his death.

Laid out in a hospice, doped up on heavy painkillers and with his family having exhausted all possible avenues to treat his advanced Stage 4b metastatic melanoma, the Prince George, B.C., man had nothing left to do but live out the rest of his life in medicated ignorance.

Until his wife, Karen, received a call from Edmonton's Cross Cancer Institute.

"'I have an idea that might work, but you have to get him here right now,'" Allan, 55, says, relaying his doctor's call. "They threw me in the back of the truck with an oxygen mask and drove to Edmonton."

Flying wasn't an option.

In his condition, transporting Allan to Edmonton by plane would have cost $16,000.

Heavily medicated, Allan doesn't remember anything about that first eight-hour journey from northern B.C. to Edmonton in March of 2011.

All he knows, and all that matters, is that within a week of going on the clinical trial for dabrafenib (available only at the Cross Cancer Institute at the time), he miraculously went from being a terminal patient receiving end-of-life care to being able to breathe on his own.

"I'm still alive!" Allan says when asked how he's fared since, a common response for many cancer survivors.

Making that boast was virtually unthinkable when physicians in B.C. determined the grandfather had run out of treatment options for his skin cancer in 2009.

"Everywhere we went within the regular system, it was always 'no, no, no' and very negative," Allan recalls.

It wasn't until he consulted with Dr. Michael Smylie, a renowned oncologist at the Cross Cancer Institute, that the narrative changed.

"He looked at my chart, looked up at me and (said), 'I can keep you alive,'" Allan says. "It was inspirational that there was hope."

Since his astonishing turnaround, Allan has become something of a medical tourist.

The last person still undertaking his particular clinical trial (recently approved by the federal government as a treatment Canada-wide), Allan hops in his pickup truck and drives to Edmonton every three months for three days of exhaustive tests, treatment and followups.

He's not alone.

Every year, an unknown but sizable number of patients (the Canadian Institute for Health Information says there were 43,590 out-of-province hospitalizations in 2011-12, but does not provide details on the kind of treatments received) leave their communities for centres of excellence across the country that offer cutting-edge therapies and expertise that can't be found elsewhere.

The stresses and costs of travelling outside their communities for potentially life-saving care are staggering for the families involved.

Since clinical trials aren't covered under B.C.'s medical-services plan, Allan and his wife (with the help of some organizations such as Save Your Skin Foundation) put up the bulk of the travel and accommodation costs for each visit to Edmonton.

It's a trip they made 27 times in 2011, 19 times in 2012 and 16 times so far in 2013.

Some expenses can be written off through federal tax benefits, but that covers only a fraction of the cost.

"If I had known how expensive it was going to be, I would have bought a house in Edmonton," Allan jokes.

And then there's the long, winding 740-kilometre drive through some of Canada's harshest terrain.

It's treacherous at the best of times, and a nightmare when winter hits the Rockies.

"That's the most stressful part for us," Allan says. "The circumstances can be beyond your control. We've been stuck for 19 hours once because of a crash ahead of us."

Though he knows the cancer can come back at any point, linking up with an expert in treating melanoma has bought Allan priceless time with his family, including the birth of his grandson, Ryder.

Comfortable family-like settings help ease the stress for patients receiving life-saving care far from home. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

Melanoma patient Mike Allan, top centre, travels from Prince George, B.C., to Edmonton every three months to receive treatment. CONTRIBUTED

Cost of out-of-town care

$2,800

The cost for families who need to travel to get crucial health care can vary greatly. Canuck Place — which covers the expense for its families — says it costs approximately $2,800 to feed a family of four per month at the hospice.

$3,100

Medical and nursing costs at the hospice range from $1,500 a day for a patient booked in for respite (usually a stable patient staying seven days at a time with family members to relax) to $2,500 for pain and symptom management, and $3,100 for a child receiving end-of-life care.

$40K

Clinical trials for new drugs and treatments can also be expensive, though pharmaceutical companies often pick up the bill. Save Your Skin Foundation founder Kathleen Barnard's clinical trial for melanoma cost a total of $40,000, but was covered by the drug company.

$3.3M

Hope Air — a registered charity that offers free flights for patients to get out-of-town health care — spent $3.3 million in 2012, 82 per cent of that directly on providing 6,091 flights.

It says 28 per cent of clients would otherwise have cancelled or postponed treatment had it not been for Hope Air's flight.

Quoted

"If I had known how expensive it was going to be, I would have bought a house in Edmonton."

Melanoma patient Mike Allan jokes about the expense of the 740-kilometre drive from his home in Prince George, B.C., for three days of treatment every three months.

Making the journey easier

Specialized care can drastically increase quality of life even when arduous travel is involved.

That was the case for the Thomas family of Kelowna, B.C. Their first son, Kaden, was born with a life-limiting heart disease and was quickly linked in with Vancouver's Canuck Place Children's Hospice — the pediatric palliative-care provider in B.C. with 77 per cent of its 450 annual patients coming from outside the Metro Vancouver area.

The family of four accessed Canuck Place for treatment, pain management, counselling and respite services for many years (they moved to Ontario at one point but returned for the drier climate of Kelowna and the care at Canuck Place) until Kaden died in September 2010 at the age of 16.

"The only option locally would be to have him admitted into hospital," mother Jennifer Thomas said.

Physicians at Canuck Place devised effective treatment and pain-management plans for Kaden — pain that local doctors had trouble controlling — and liaised with Kelowna care providers to ensure the wheelchair-bound boy was comfortable at home.

Hospice staff were able to answer "all the hard questions" when local pediatricians couldn't, Thomas said.

"We have just a handful of pediatric palliative-care physicians in the province, and five of them are here," said Canuck Place CEO Margaret McNeil. "A family wants to go somewhere where they know has the best experience with a particular disease. And because they're very complicated, it's hard for a local pediatrician to have that experience."

Brothers Kaden, right, and Colby Thomas were regular visitors of Canuck Place as Kaden received treatment for a life-limiting heart disease. CONTRIBUTED

Beyond medical care, Canuck Place takes the stress off families with counselling, family activities and camp trips many take for granted.

"We didn't have any support like that outside of B.C.," Thomas said. "It made a significant difference with our life, marriage and relationship with our children."

Canuck Place — which gets 80 per cent of its funding from donors — foots the bill.

"We really want to make it easy for families to be here," McNeil said. "We believe that there should be no barriers."

There are countless organizations that ease the financial burden of patients who must leave their communities.

Facilities such as Easter Seals House Vancouver offer rooms for $20 a night, so patients don't pay premium hotel rates while travelling for procedures.

Canuck Place CEO Margaret McNeil says the hospice does everything it can to ease the financial and emotional burdens of treatment. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

The logistics and cost alone can be a defeating experience, says Save Your Skin Foundation founder Kathleen Barnard.

She ran the gamut in 2005 after being diagnosed with melanoma and is now dedicated to making the process easier for skin-cancer patients.

"It was so tough for us as a family," Barnard said. "Do I want to spend that much money and leave home on something offering a five per cent success rate or is it just an added burden?"

Organizations such as Barnard's exist so families don't have to compromise.

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Putting specialized care on the map

The health-care landscape across Canada changes constantly, as hospitals acquire new technology and specialists and provincial governments revise their health-care policies. Here's a look at some of the specialized care that Canadians travel for

Edmonton

Only a handful of surgeons can perform pediatric heart transplants. In Canada, most young patients get their new hearts at the Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton or SickKids Hospital in Toronto.

Toronto

SickKids: Children come to SickKids in Toronto for specialized treatments of rare cases and clinical trials. The hospital also has arrangements with some provinces for certain kinds of care. For example, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia send pediatric bone-transplant patients here.

Montreal

People seeking gender-reassignment surgery are often referred to the GRS centre in Montreal. The procedure is covered by most, but not all, provinces' health-care plans.

United States

Some Canadian patients must go to the United States for certain procedures, including Open MRIs (for patients whose claustrophobia prevents them from going in a traditional machine), some types of genetic testing, stem-cell transplants and certain complex orthopedic, ophthalmological and cancer procedures.

Winnipeg

Most Canadian patients who need gamma knife radiosurgery for treatment of certain kinds of brain tumours and other conditions go to the Winnipeg Health Sciences Centre or the University Health Network in Toronto.

Halifax

Patients from New Brunswick, Newfoundland and P.E.I. will go to the Atlantic Canada Multi-Organ Transplant Program at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax for kidney, liver, heart and pancreas transplantation services.

TEXT: JESSICA SMITH & MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Sunday Ticket. Google, NFL holding meetings

Google has been holding meetings with the National Football League, raising speculation that the Internet monolith is seeking new inroads into television.

Other tech companies like Apple are reportedly in talks with cable providers to boost access to blockbuster television shows through their devices.

With Google sitting on a cash pile of $48 billion US, the league's Sunday Ticket package is easily within its reach. The contract is currently held by DirecTV, which pays about $1 billion annually for the rights. That contract, however, expires at the end of the 2014 season.

The NFL confirmed its meetings with Google Wednesday, but declined to discuss the nature of those talks, as did Google.

"Members of our office meet often with innovative leaders in Silicon Valley and around the world," the NFL said in a statement. "We are constantly looking for ways to make our game better on the field, in the stadium and for fans."

The Sunday Ticket Package provides fans with access to most out-of-market NFL games not televised nationally on ESPN or on NBC.

Citi analyst Jason Bazinet believes that DirecTV is losing money on the deal, generating only about $725 million US a year in revenue. He thinks a new contract would run about $1.5 billion if DirecTV were to make another go for it.

Google recently unveiled a device called Chromecast, which is part of its attempt to make it easier for people to access Internet content on their TVs. Chromecast is a small stick roughly the same size as a thumb drive that can be plugged into an HDMI port on flat-panel TVs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Baltimore Ravens fans watch Super Bowl XLVII. GETTY IMAGES FILE

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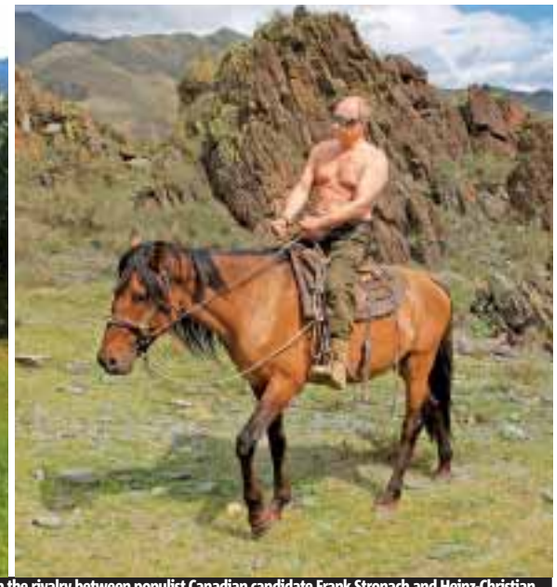

Ahead of the Austrian general elections, bare-chested displays are the latest twist in the rivalry between populist Canadian candidate Frank Stronach and Heinz-Christian Strache, left, who heads the anti-immigrant and EU-skeptic Freedom Party. The candidates seem to have taken a page from Russian President Vladimir Putin's playbook. Putin, right, is notorious for an array of stunts including riding a horse bare-chested. LEFT: AUSTRIAN FREEDOM PARTY VIA FACEBOOK; RIGHT: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Stronach, 80, hops on beefcake bandwagon

Austria. Canadian auto-parts billionaire takes his shirt off in bid for political office

Austria's general election campaign is heating up with two high-profile contenders — one of them a Canadian — going way beyond rolling up their shirt sleeves. They've now taken the shirts right off.

Borrowing a page from Russian President Vladimir Putin's playbook, the beefcake displays are the latest twist in the rivalry between populist Canadian candidate Frank Stronach and Heinz-Christian Strache, head of the anti-immigrant and EU-skeptic Freedom Party.

The two are both seeking the protest vote in Austria's Sept. 29 election. On a continent where mainstream electioneering is normally a staid affair, Stronach was first to doff his shirt.

Bare-chested battle

"I don't need to be ashamed of my body."

Frank Stronach, Austro-Canadian billionaire and founder of auto parts giant Magna International Inc., as he revealed a trim 80-year-old physique to Austrian media.

Wearing jeans and a smile, he revealed a trim 80-year-old upper body as he stood next to his private lake during weekend interviews with Austrian dailies. "I don't need to be ashamed of my body," said the billionaire founder of auto-parts giant Magna International.

Strache responded immediately. A photo of the tanned and athletic 42-year-old clad in swimming trunks appeared Sunday on his Facebook page, with the caption "top fit in the election campaign!"

The battle went into round two on Monday, with Austria's major newspapers carrying the photos along with articles debating whether they constituted below-the-belt campaigning.

Commenting on the "naked duel," the tabloid Oesterreich praised Stronach for "showing the new self-confidence of the generation '60 plus.' In politics. In fitness. In looks." But it warned that Strache's decision to challenge Stronach's gambit "with his fitness-centre muscles" now risks turning the campaign into a circus.

The rivalry started when Stronach founded his Team Stronach organization last year. It aims for the same voters that Strache's Freedom Party views as its own — Austrians disenchanted with both the conservative People's Party and the Socialists, parties that now form the government coalition.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Internet access

New Facebook partnership aims to get 7B online

Facebook wants to get more of the world's more than seven billion people — all of them, actually — online through a partnership with some of the world's largest mobile technology companies. The partnership, called Internet.org, includes Korean electronics giant Samsung, Finnish handset maker Nokia and wireless chip maker Qualcomm Inc. Plans include developing cheaper smartphones and tools to reduce the amount of data required to run apps. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An HTC First phone with a Facebook mobile interface is shown at Facebook's head office. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Dallas

Ex-United steward will plead guilty in bomb threat

A former United Airlines flight attendant has agreed to plead guilty to making a bomb threat against a United jet flying between London, U.K. and L.A. The man's attorney said that United had declined to investigate the man's claims that a male supervisor sexually harassed him.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 95.48¢ (-0.78¢)

TSX 12,573.08 (-97.03)

OIL $103.85 US (-$1.26)

GOLD $1,370.10 US (-$2.50)

Natural gas: $3.47 US (+3¢)
Dow Jones: 14,897.55 (-105.44)

TIME TO SHARPEN YOUR PENCILS

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

It's almost time for kids to head back to school, which means the back-to-school ads have been out so long that many of the principal actors in them have died.

It's given me lots of time to think about back to school, and reinforced for me how important it is to buy the right things for your school-aged children, lest you ruin their fragile lives.

No pressure.

I don't have kids myself, which makes me the perfect person to tell you what to buy for yours: Friends are always telling me about what their best-laid child-rearing plans are. But then their kids don't come according to spec and suddenly they're doing things they swore they'd never do.

So as a childless guy I can bring an unsullied perspective to the back-to-school purchases — and jump right to the decisions you're going to make anyway without the high-principled hand-wringing in between.

To me, back to school is the young person's version of New Year's resolutions — proof that we can start with a clean slate and get it right this time. A sweet lie, in other words.

I still miss the back-to-school gift package — mostly because I haven't had a nice, fresh set of clothes since 1993.

I've bought new clothes since then, sure, but I mostly replace items one at a time as they become too threadbare to wear. Sometimes I time it just right and walk into the Gap as a growing gap in my jeans reaches the breaking point, and my pants moult from my body as I enter the changing room, like a denim lobster.

So nothing was better than a whole set of new clothes, backpack and math gear (something where the dinosaur's head turns from different angles, please).

A school-grade kid can quickly build up a lot of baggage — in my case, a backpack filled with ink stains, crumpled papers from three months ago and a crushed banana I'd forgotten about.

But back-to-school supplies also offered a symbolic reset: I could forget about the time I cried in home economics because the teacher yelled when I forgot to add soap while washing the dishes. I could forget when I buried a rose in the snow because Missy Titus wouldn't accept it on Valentine's Day. It helped me forget getting a concussion playing soccer baseball (the concussion helped, too).

Those clean, perfectly folded shirts and pants lying on the bed brought a sense of order to my life. I don't know why I wasn't more popular.

So my advice to parents is: Buy distracting stuff. It doesn't have to be the best stuff, or the most trendy stuff. Just bright and shiny enough that your kids can forget how miserable school is. Bags of eraser shavings were popular at one point in my schooling. So don't go nuts.

With the right level of distraction protecting them from their school years, they can grow up to be whatever they want, maybe even the principals in back-to-school advertising. It's a year-round business.

ZOOM

Way to impress a lady

COURTESY RED BULL

Diver wows near Statue of Liberty

New York's Statue of Liberty was the backdrop for world champion diver Orlando Duque to leap from a helicopter hovering 75 feet (22.86 metres) above the Hudson River. Duque, 38, from Cali, Colombia, performed the stunt to promote the fifth stop of the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series due to take place in Boston on Aug. 25.

METRO

Diver's viewpoint

"It doesn't get any better than diving in front of something as iconic as the Statue of Liberty."

Orlando Duque, high diver from Cali, Colombia

Dive in seconds

3

seconds is all the time Duque had to land a flying back somersault while travelling at speeds of 80 km/h.

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

Last year's taxes still not done? Instead of fretting over making time for these necessary-but-heinous tasks, why not get someone else to take care of them for you? Say goodbye to life's annoying administrative chores and hello to outsourcing with the help of these sites:

AskForTask.com:
Toronto-based startup connects people across Canada who either need a hand or have an extra one to offer for anything from cleaning the tub to building a website.

DoMyStuff.com:
Connects people needing help with people offering to give help with just about anything (though the site could benefit from connecting with a designer).

Letters

metronews.ca

RE: Vancouver's Science World Trying To Teach Kids About Sex? How Dare They ... published Aug. 21

They are already being sexualized between magazines, TV, video games, music, and other societal things. This is a huge learning moment for you and your children. Take it, show them and let them ask questions. Education is power, not ignorance or hiding.

Heather Avery posted to metronews.ca

It is better to teach the kids about sex so they can make an informed decision. I'd rather have the kids know about sex minus the self righteous moral guardians than have teenage pregnancies. I have seen that one first hand with someone I knew in middle school who was 13 and pregnant. She ended up dropping out shortly after.

Taggart Romkey posted to metronews.ca

Let's all assume: This is at a public event and establishment. Committees will have been involved in deciding what, and what not, to include. It will be suitable for both genders and for the recommended ages of viewers.

It will likely be better than anything an anxious parent, or a priest, or a misguided peer, or a movie could show and tell. And it provides an opportunity for parents to have an educated talk with their curious kids, or maybe become better educated themselves.

If I lived in Vancouver, I would go. If my kids were not already grown up, I'd take them. Maybe I'd see it myself first to see if it's suitable. We had all the sex conversations with them before they were old enough to reproduce, for their own protection and ours.

DaleWale posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: saskatoonletters@metronews.ca

metro

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SCENE

Well, this sucks but it's not Rufus

New movie. Producer of new vampire film laments province's decision to eliminate tax credit for movies made in the region

BACKSTAGE PASS
Simon Hiatt
saskatoon@metronews.ca

The title character in producer Anand Ramayya's new vampire film Rufus is not quite dead, but not quite alive, has an uncertain future, and is dealing with a lot of confusion.

In many ways you could say Rufus is facing a lot of the same issues as the filmmaking industry in Saskatchewan.

"We're hoping that something will turn around in the next few years, but I have to look at other options and I have to build a new business model for myself," Ramayya said in an interview just before the Saskatoon premiere of Rufus.

Ramayya, whose dramatic, animated and documentary productions have received more than 30 awards including five Geminis, says he is being forced to turn away from filmmaking in his home province by the government's decision to eliminate the tax credit incentive program.

While he is keeping his home in Saskatoon, he will be dividing his time between the city and working in India where he has already achieved success in the industry.

"I've done four pictures there so far and I've got another documentary in the works right now and a dramatic feature that's a period piece. It's a Canadian film, but partially set in India."

Producer Anand Ramayya poses in front of the Roxy Theatre where his film Rufus premiered last week and plays for the last time tonight. SIMON HIATT/FOR METRO

Ramayya believes he is lucky that he will continue to have a home in Saskatchewan, even if his work takes him elsewhere. He knows others in the province who worked in the industry aren't as fortunate.

"The crew that worked on (Rufus) was amazing and it was a really tough project in a lot of ways, but their professionalism and dedication made it happen," Ramayya said. "And those are the kinds of people that have been forced to leave."

Ramayya also has high marks for his cast, including Sons of Anarchy star, and Saskatoon native, Kim Coates. The feeling is mutual for Coates who also attended last Friday's premiere.

"He's one of my closest friends ever, I'm so proud of what he has done in this province. What is happening with this incredible mistake of cutting the tax credit, it means talented, artistic people like this are having to look elsewhere," Coates said.

Ramayya is a second generation Saskatchewan filmmaker who first worked on his father's sets in the 1980s. He has worked in the industry professionally since 1998 and holds out hope it will one day return to the province.

"I'm very invested in Saskatchewan and I want to see (filmmaking) come back and I know it will eventually. I believe there will be change; it may not be this year but maybe next year, who knows? I'm hopeful."

Local setting

Rufus, which concludes a one-week run at the Roxy Theatre in Saskatoon tonight, was shot primarily in the small town of Dundurn, south of the city. Ramayya said it was an ideal setting in many ways.

- **Quote.** "The whole town rallied behind us, the mayor, the town council, the citizens. We shot at the Legion Hall, the curling rink, the hockey rink, the town hall. And everybody was so genuinely excited to have us there and supportive of what we were doing," said Anand Ramayya.

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X marks the spot as old flames Hoult and Lawrence begin again

Talk about a sequel: It looks like Jennifer Lawrence and ex-boyfriend Nicholas Hoult have rekindled their romance. The pair, who first met filming X-Men: First Class in 2011 and dated until earlier this year, have been in Montreal filming X-Men: Days of Future Past — and spending plenty of off-duty time together, too, according to E! News. Lawrence and Hoult took a day off in Montreal's La Fontaine Park earlier this week. The still adorable duo, each clad in shorts, tank tops and shades, held hands as they walked along and then shared a bottle of champagne and a salad while stretching out on the grass. Lawrence rested her head on Hoult's stomach as she paged through Mockingjay, the final book of The Hunger Games trilogy (so she was mixing a little business with pleasure, no big deal), while her beau used his iPad. A source says they were very touchy-feely and laughed a lot during their outing. Earlier, they showed up at the film's wrap party together.

Jennifer Lawrence

Wentworth Miller ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Russian invite rejection signals Miller's coming out

Prison Break actor Wentworth Miller declined an invitation to the St. Petersburg International Film Festival, publishing his response on GLAAD's website: "Thank you for your kind invitation. As someone who has enjoyed visiting Russia in the past it would make me happy to say yes. However, as a gay man, I must decline. I am deeply troubled by the current attitude toward and treatment of gay men and women by the Russian government. The situation is in no way acceptable, and I cannot in good conscience participate in a celebratory occasion hosted by a country where people like myself are being systematically denied their basic right to live and love openly."

Lindsay Lohan

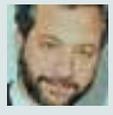
Lohan's Oprah sit down doesn't live up to billing

Despite all the buzz and build-up, Lindsay Lohan's much-discussed sit-down with Oprah Winfrey failed to produce much in the way of ratings. The one-hour special averaged 892,000 viewers during its premiere, with an average of 504,000 viewers tuning in for the encore broadcast that immediately followed. By contrast, Winfrey's interview with Lance Armstrong in January pulled in 4.3 million viewers, breaking records for her OWN network. The Lohan special came in just above normal.

Twitter

@ElizabethHurley
Another gorgeous day- is this the best English summer we've had for years? Bliss....

@MichaelChiklis
When I think of all the different languages that developed literally right next to each other I can't help but think: How did Europe happen?



@JuddApatow
At least I didn't eat fries. (Positive re-enforcement for the end of the day

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Scientology failed to get Bono and Brad on the hook

The Church of Scientology tried to recruit both Brad Pitt and Bono in the 1990s, according to former Scientologist Jenna Miscavige Hill, niece of Church leader David Miscavige. "I think that celebrities are more inclined to be egocentric and Scientology caters for that — you're your own God. They're probably being told that all the time," she tells Radar Online. "But they're probably insecure, so the self-help of Scientology lends itself to that. And Scientology is meant to save people and the world, so the charitable thing appeals to a celebrity. If you're egocentric, not always confident or insecure because of being in the public eye and want to be charitable, Scientology pushes your buttons. That's why someone like Bono would fit the bill perfectly as so many people know him." According to Miscavige Hill, Pitt went through the Church's entry-level Purification Program while dating Juliette Lewis but ultimately decided it wasn't for him.

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Who We Are: Metro is Canada's most-read national daily newspaper brand. Metro targets YAMs (youthful, active metropolitans) and reaches more than 1.6 million readers daily and 3.9 million over the course of a week. Metro launched in Canada in Toronto in 2000 and in the spring of 2012, we launched in 6 new cities. In short – we're still growing!

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PLEASE QUOTE: "Sales Representative - Saskatoon" in the subject line.
All submissions will be treated as confidential.**

metro

The foolproof transitional season uniform

The perfect, simple outfit to cleanse your palate before autumn's trends roll in

METRO WORLD NEWS

The simple, classic white shirt and jeans combination is an under appreciated thing. Too often it gets bogged down with hyper-personalization: a wacky jacket here, piles of quirky necklace layering there. It's that rare, perfect outfit in which a set of fashion staples converge in a can't-screw-it-up formula. But sometimes, the best way to pull this off is by not tampering with it too much. The simplicity makes this look a nice breather of a palate cleanser before preparing to unpack all of the heady, intensity (bell shaped skirts the size of small cities anyone?) that will be autumn's trends.

Topshop
Moto Smokey Green Leigh Jeans, $76, topshop.com.

Lizzy Disney
Lock Bag – Black, $430, darkroom-london.com.

& Other Stories
Leather Belt, $44, stories.com

Charlie Collins, who we spotted in London, looks flawless in an unaffected kind of way because she didn't go overboard with the styling. METRO

Zara
button neck blouse, $50, zara.com.

Loeffler Randal
Pippa Collar flats, $275, shopbop.com.

Spitfire
Mainstream Wayfarer Sunglasses, $41, asos.com.

Dress it like Beckham

David Beckham for H&M
HANDOUT

H&M to sport the vintage and the varsity this season

Trend-conscious gentlemen who head into H&M this fall will likely pick up on the heritage sportswear feel of David Beckham Bodywear pieces. The newest campaign launched on Aug. 22 and is full of old East London atmosphere. Raglan-sleeve jersey and henleys come in athletic greys, alongside grey tank tops and a three-pack of grey trunks.

Pajamas are an essential both for lounging and sleep, and this autumn there are ribbed pajama pants, as well as full-length or short pants in drawstring jersey.

Coinciding with the new pieces will be a brand-new campaign set in an old-style sports changing room. It marks the latest stage in David Beckham's long-term collaboration with H&M, centred on a core collection of body wear pieces which are available all year round.

METRO

Kellan Lutz GETTY IMAGES

I love fashion Lutz and Lutz

What's a hulking vampire to do without moody mortals in distress and with no more computer-enhanced battles to wage in the forest?

For 28-year-old Twilight actor Kellan Lutz — better known as Emmett, the heartthrob brother of leading man Edward — it's still about looking as good as superhumanly possible.

Lutz unveiled his Pre-Spring 2014 collection with Abbot + Main this week in Las Vegas during MAGIC, one of the fashion world's most influential trade shows.

"It's great to find something outside of acting," he said in an interview Monday at a Las Vegas Strip hotel suite, resting a chiselled, stubbly chin on a sofa pillow.

Born in North Dakota and raised in Arizona and the Midwest — places he described as trendiness-challenged — he started modelling at 14 and developed an eye for style hanging out with fashion and photography greats.

Soon enough, he stopped borrowing clothes from some of his six brothers. They were borrowing from him.

His brand — which debuted in 2011 and is named after an intersection in the beachy-cool Venice Beach, Calif. neighbourhood where Lutz once lived — mainly consists of soft, slim-fitting T-shirts and not-trying-too-hard hoodies.

Initially just for men, two-thirds of the collection is now for women.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the most versatile risotto of them all?

"This is a great risotto recipe that uses lemon and asparagus as its flavour boosters. Feel free to experiment with other vegetables and cheeses to create your own signature risotto," writes Mary Rolph Lamontagne in her book Eats.

Ingredients

- 3 cups chicken stock, approx. (or vegetable stock for a vegetarian option)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup minced onion
- 1 cup arborio rice
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 tsp lemon zest
- 1/4 cup soft goat's cheese
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup cooked, chopped asparagus
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tsp butter
- Pea shoots (optional)

1. Bring the stock to a simmer in a saucepan.

2. In a separate medium-sized saucepan, heat 2 tablespoons of oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for a few minutes until translucent. Add the rice and cook for 2 minutes more, stirring until nicely coated and opaque in colour. Add the wine and stir until most of it has been absorbed.

3. Add 1/2 cup of stock to the rice, stirring continuously until the liquid is almost completely absorbed. Add more stock in 1/2 cup increments and repeat this process until the rice is tender, but still firm to the bite, 15–20 minutes. Remove from the heat.

4. Gently stir in the lemon zest, goat's cheese, Parmesan and the asparagus. Add salt and pepper to taste and the butter. Cover and set aside for 3–5 minutes. Serve with a garnish of Parmesan shavings and pea shoots.

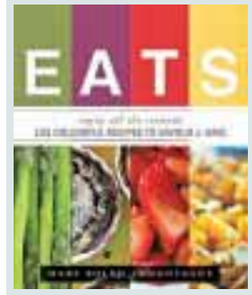
Asparagus Risotto

This recipe serves six. CONTRIBUTED/ EATS BY MARY ROLPH LAMONTAGNE

ALL RECIPES EXCERPTED FROM EATS ENJOY ALL THE SECONDS: 135 COLOURFUL RECIPES TO SAVOUR BY MARY ROLPH LAMONTAGNE, WITH PERMISSION.

Cookbook of the Week

A splash of colour for your table



Eats by Mary Rolph Lamontagne is filled with creative recipes and simple basics — from all over the world — that make using leftovers a breeze. Fruits and vegetables (the most highly wasted items in a fridge) are prepared in master recipes and then reinvented in three or four others. Mary also offers tips for buying, growing, cooking, storing and freezing ingredients.

Among the recipes are: Tanzanian Eggplant Curry, Apple Sauce Spice Muffins, Spinach and Ricotta Gnocchi, and more. METRO

Appetizer. Zucchini Bites

"This is a great way to use up leftover plain quinoa or even quinoa that has been prepared with flavourful herbs or minced vegetables," writes Mary Rolph Lamontagne in her book Eats.

"Add some egg, a little flour and some cheese and you cannot go wrong."

Lamontagne sometimes substitutes chopped cooked spinach for the grated zucchini, uses rice flour for gluten-free bites and changes the cheese to cheddar for a different flavour.

1. Preheat the oven to 180 C (350 F). Grease a mini-muffin pan.

2. Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl.

3. Fill the muffin cups to the top with the quinoa mixture. Bake for 15–20 minutes, or until a tester comes out clean. Serve with a dollop of crème fraîche mixed with a spoonful of sweet chili sauce, a South African favourite.

Ingredients

- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup grated zucchini
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- a pinch of paprika
- 1/2 cup grated Emmenthal cheese
- 1 tbsp flour
- Salt and pepper to taste

Red bell pepper cream effortlessly jazzes up chicken

"Serving this red bell pepper sauce with grilled chicken jazzes up the dish without too much effort," writes Mary Rolph Lamontagne in her book Eats. "I also use this sauce on grilled fish."

The sauce can be made ahead and kept in the fridge for three days. It can also be used as a pasta sauce.

1. Mix the oil, garlic, chili powder and oregano together in a small bowl. Add the chicken and coat with the mixture. Set aside for at least 30 minutes.

2. While the chicken is marinating, make the red pepper sauce. Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the bell peppers, chili and garlic and sauté for 2–3 minutes until the vegetables are tender.

3. Add the vinegar, lemon juice and cream and cook for an additional 2–3 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool to room temperature.

4. Purée the pepper mixture in a food processor or blender and season with salt and pepper. Return the pepper mixture to the pan and reheat before serving.

5. Heat the grill and cook the chicken fillets over medium heat for approximately 5 minutes per side.

6. Serve with the sauce.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 4 chicken breast fillets, pounded

Red bell pepper cream

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 roasted red bell peppers
- 1/2 red chili pepper, sliced
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- juice of 1/2 medium lemon
- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- Salt and ground black pepper

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BACK TO SCHOOL

Thursday, August 22, 2013

One way to improve grades is to set up space to do homework in your home and make sure you have all the materials you need on hand to complete the daily school tasks. DMITRY KALINOVSKY/COLOURBOX

10 ways to manage homework

MICHELLE WILLIAMS
For Metro

Just about any parent will agree that one reason to not look forward to the start of school is homework.

Here are some easy and effective tips from Toronto District School Board principal Cassandra Alviani-Alvarez on how to smooth the homework waters in your house:

1 Reduce stress by setting a non-negotiable homework time around their after-school schedules.

2 Work with your child to set up a calendar showing everything that's due over the course of the week or month and plan homework schedules accordingly.

3 Help your kids get organized: Set up the space, have all the materials they need on hand, and remind them to put finished work in the knapsack so it's not forgotten in the morning.

4 Remember to remain calm. Things get heated quickly if a child is having difficulty and you are struggling to make things clear. Have patience and look for different ways of explaining the situation.

5 Encourage your child to take short breaks when they get stuck on something.

6 If kids are struggling to stay focused, try turning it into a game. Use a timer and challenge them to see how much they can get done in five or 10 minutes.

7 It's important to encourage them to try to make some effort before you pitch in and help. Read instructions and get them to articulate what they need to do first before you walk away.

8 Resist taking over the assignment. You want it to be a true reflection of your child's ability. Teachers know when they are getting a parent's work — the quality is very different.

9 If your child just isn't understanding a subject, send a note back to the teacher explaining the difficulty so you can work together to help your child through the challenging tasks.

10 Praise is important. Make sure your child knows they have done a good job when they complete their work to the best of their ability. Keep it positive as they go off to bed to set them up for success the next day.

Lending a hand has its benefits

As a parent, you may not be convinced there are many good reasons for spending time in your child's classroom. But educators disagree.

"There are loads of good reasons for parents to participate at school," says Toronto District School Board principal Cassandra Alviani-Alvarez.

She said that when kids see parents in a leadership role in school they begin to understand the value of school — knowing that your parent is there validates school's importance.

"Parents also can use this opportunity to build positive relationships with their child's teacher," Alviani-Alvarex said. "Helping out at school also allows you to help make things happen, whether it's field trips, enriching classroom opportunities or making money for the school to buy the things they need. And, most of all, it's pretty exciting for your kids to have you in their environment."

Kids feel proud when parents are there to see their work and meet their teachers and peers.

Being in your child's classroom has direct benefits to you as a parent, too. It gives you the chance to see your child in the classroom, to understand how they are performing, who your child's friends are, and seeing that they are safe, learning, happy and engaged.

And watch that you don't overdo it. Spend no more than one day a week in your child's classroom — you don't want your child to depend too much on seeing you there.

If you want to spend more time helping in the school outside of your child's classroom — or if you have a job and can't be there regularly during the day — know that there are other ways you can support the school community and have a voice, such as joining the parent-teacher association.

MICHELLE WILLIAMS

Parents can support their children and their school by volunteering. COLOURBOX

Get the upper hand

High-tech best bets

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

While pens and pencils never seem to go out of style, the student in your life can get an upper hand on their classroom education with the help of a few gadgets.

Here are some of the best bets for a high-tech education this fall.

Vtech InnoTab 3S — $109.99

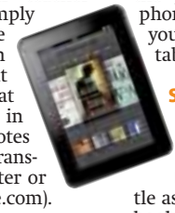
A tablet for youngsters to call their own. The durable InnoTab 3S comes preloaded with kid-friendly apps for a fun learning experience. Kids can create and play their own videos, MP3s and even surf the web on the kid-safe browser. Recommended for children ages three to nine. (vtechcanada.com).

Apple iPod Touch — $229 and up

Access tens of thousands of apps, ideal for the classroom. Your iPod can become anything from a scientific calculator to a language translator. Games and music are an added bonus for those students who have to endure lengthy bus rides to and from school. If you want a larger screen, the iPad or iPad Mini are more great choices. (apple.ca).

Sky Wi-Fi Smartpen — $199.99

Perfect for classes where students must take dictated notes. This "smart pen" records everything you hear, say, write or draw. Want to go back and hear what your teacher said in class? Simply tap a word on the page and the pen will replay what was said at that exact moment in time. Written notes can also be transferred to computer or tablet. (livescribe.com).



Moleskin Evernote Smart Notebook — $29.99

Everything written in this notebook can easily be transformed into digital notes thanks to smart stickers embedded in the pages. Just take a photo of the page with your smartphone and you can transfer your notes to your laptop or tablet. (moleskin.com).

Samsung Chromebook — $269.99

An easy-to-use, lightweight, budget-friendly laptop that boots in as little as eight seconds. Chromebooks use Google's Chrome operating system and are designed for web connectivity. All of your homework, emails and assignments are stored online using Google's cloud services. This means you have access to your work anywhere, as long as you have Internet connection. Chromebooks require Internet connectivity to be useful, so make sure your child's school has widely accessable Wi-Fi before considering a Chromebook. (futureshop.ca).

Sony Xperia Z — $149.95 with two-year contract

Leaking drink boxes and water bottles can create a real mess in a backpack. Your homework may get soggy, but Sony's Xperia Z smartphone can withstand even the wettest conditions. It is water- and dust-resistant, which means it can be tossed into a backpack with little fear. The five-inch HD display is perfect for accessing tens of thousands of apps. (Bell.ca).

Kindle Fire HD — $214 and up

Make reading a little more fun. The Kindle Fire HD doubles as an eReader and tablet. Not only can you access more than one million titles from Amazon's library, you an also download some of the most popular Android apps. The best feature is the parental controls that allows you to limit the amount of time your kids play games or use apps on the device. (amazon.ca).

Powerbag — $128

Carry everything you need for class plus charge your gadgets at the same time. Powerbag includes a built-in rechargeable battery pack with USB port to charge thousands of gadgets. The 3000mAh battery has enough juice to charge the average smartphone twice. More powerful batteries are also available. (amazon.ca).

Clockwise, from left, Vtech InnoTab 3S, $109.99, Kindle Fire HD, $214 and up, Samsung Chromebook, $269.99, Sky Wi-Fi Smartpen, $199.99, Apple iPod Touch, $229 and up, Powerbag, $128, and Sony Xperia Z, $149.95 with two-year contract.

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Global style comes to Canada

Zara Home opens in the Great White North, allowing Canucks access to the Spanish store's decor gems.

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

When Zara fashion stores first opened in Spain more than 30 years ago, they were a big hit.

Their up-to-date fashions at affordable prices has always kept the global-style shopper happy. Now home decor enthusiasts have something equally exciting to look forward to: Zara opens its first home decor and style store at Yorkdale Shopping Centre in Toronto on Thursday, followed by an opening at Carrefour Laval in Quebec.

From small furnishings, bedding and tabletops Zara offers up-to-the-minute home fashions for every room in the house. Twice weekly new home fashions will be delivered to stores to keep the merchandise fresh and the assortment new every time you visit.

Canadians can now also shop online at zarahome.com.

I went shopping around and here's a sneak peak at a few of our in-store and online favourites; luxury-styled items caught my eye as must-haves this fall.

Expect a wide range of decor styles to be sold at Zara stores and online. New products are introduced every two weeks, which gives home decor enthusiasts a reason to visit the Zara stores often.

Ceramic Lamp $200

Navy and white never go out of fashion and look crisp with the neutrals or pops with other strong colours. Switch the white shade for a gold metallic and it will go from traditional-chic to instant glamour. Buy these in pairs — a good way to display classic lamps.

Gold Monogrammed Flatware $10-12

Gold is one of the season's biggest decor trends, so why not add it to your dining experience? These are ultra chic and not just for formal occasions. After all, you deserve the everyday lux experience of eating with this latest trend.

Square Glass Tables $270

Wherever you place them, these tables will make your room look light, airy and sophisticated. Two sets side by side will make a very versatile coffee table for the living room.

Velvet Cushion with Feather Trim $60

Lux prevails with fresh green velvet and feathers. A great way to add this year's most coveted colour and to wake up a boring chaise lounge or neutral sofa. Use with caution — no more than two pillows or your sofa will look like an ostrich farm.

Fur Blanket $200

A great wrap for chilly nights on the patio or by the fire during the winter months; luxury fur trims are everywhere on the fashion runways and the trend in home decor is no exception.

Tiger Woods

Soft bed blamed for rough morning

Another week, another nagging injury for Tiger Woods — this time from a soft bed in his hotel.

Woods did not play the back nine of his pro-am Wednesday at the Barclays. He still walked with his amateur partners, but only chipped and putted at Liberty National.

He says his neck and back were stiff in the morning. He attributes it to a soft bed in his hotel and says he didn't want to push it.

Woods was seen grabbing his back in the final round of the PGA Championship. He had an elbow injury that troubled him for two months this summer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tennis

Sharapova pulls out of U.S. Open

Maria Sharapova withdrew from the U.S. Open on Wednesday because of a right shoulder injury.

Sharapova has played only one match on tour since her second-round loss at Wimbledon in June. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

London calling

"It's my homeland, and if they say, 'We need your help,' I'm going to consider that."

John Herdman says he's happy as head coach of the Canadian women's soccer team, but he would listen if approached about taking the vacant England job.

Ichiro Suzuki of the Yankees acknowledges the crowd after hitting a single for his 4,000th career hit between Japan and the major leagues during a game against the Blue Jays on Wednesday in New York. FRANK FRANKLIN II/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ichiro slashes way to 4,000-hit plateau

MLB. But the Yankees' Soriano deals Blue Jays the crippling blow

Alfonso Soriano hit a tiebreaking two-run homer with two outs in the eighth inning, Ichiro Suzuki got his 4,000th hit between the major leagues and Japan, and the Yankees handed the Toronto Blue Jays their 12th straight loss in New York, 4-2 on Wednesday night.

David Huff (1-0) pitched one-hit ball in five innings of relief to shut down the Blue Jays before New York finally got to Toronto's R.A. Dickey.

On Wednesday

Yankees	Blue Jays
4	2

The 39-year-old Suzuki hit a liner off Dickey (9-12) that bounced just beyond diving third baseman Brett Lawrie for the milestone hit in the first inning. Suzuki broke a tie with Lou Gehrig when he got his 2,722nd major league hit in his 13th season. The speedy outfielder amassed 1,278 hits in nine seasons with Orix of Japan's Pacific League.

Suzuki's teammates streamed out of the dugout and surrounded him at first base. A grinning Suzuki then faced the cheering fans and bowed.

When he went to his position in right field for the second inning, Suzuki tipped his cap to fans who greeted him with a standing ovation.

Adam Warren started for New York to give 41-year-old Andy Pettitte one more day after the Yankees stayed on rotation for their doubleheader Tuesday. He gave up two runs in three-plus innings, including Josh Thole's tying homer in the fourth. It was Thole's first homer with the Blue Jays.

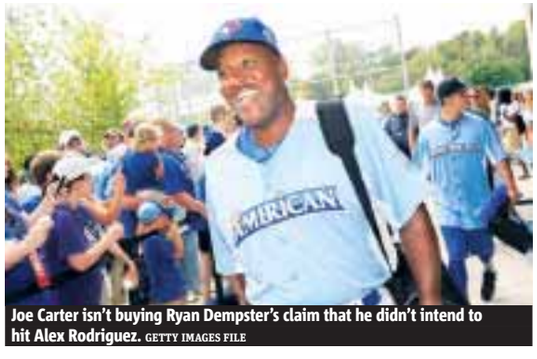
Huff relieved and didn't allow a hit until Lawrie led off the eighth with an infield single. Huff walked four, one intentionally, but never was in real trouble.

Toronto left at least one runner on base in each of the first eight innings and was 2-for-15 with runners on base.

Dickey overcame a rough start to strike out nine while giving up six hits. But after retiring 14 of 15, he allowed a two-out single to Robinson Cano. Soriano then snapped a 0-for-17 skid with a two-run shot to left for the 4-2 lead.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Carter slams pitcher's offering of innocence



Joe Carter isn't buying Ryan Dempster's claim that he didn't intend to hit Alex Rodriguez. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Former Toronto Blue Jays great Joe Carter rejects Ryan Dempster's claim that he didn't intentionally hit troubled Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez with a pitch last weekend, saying the Red Sox right-hander's message was "loud and clear."

Dempster received a five-game suspension Tuesday for hitting Rodriguez with a pitch in a game Sunday. The native of Gibsons, B.C., maintains he wasn't trying to intentionally hit Rodriguez, who has drawn the wrath of his peers for appealing a 211-game suspension for violating baseball's drug and labour agreement.

Quoted

"It's taken away from the guys who played it the right way."

Joe Carter, who contends drug cheats have created an uneven playing field

But Carter isn't buying it.

"The message was loud and clear," Carter said. "I don't agree with what transpired, because if you're going to throw at someone like that just as a statement, you do it the first pitch, and then you go on about the rest of the game."

Dempster threw one pitch behind A-Rod's knees and two more inside during the second inning. Then his 3-0 pitch struck Rodriguez's left elbow pad and ricocheted off his back.

Carter chalked Dempster's actions up to the unwritten "codes" that players use to police themselves. But the ex-Jay tacitly endorsed the beaning.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Horoscopes

Aries
March 21 - April 20
You don't usually pay much attention to details but you will need to as of today. The Sun's change of sign warns it may be costly if you don't. Whatever you are working on, get the small stuff right first.

Taurus
April 21 - May 21
A dynamic phase begins for you today and you must take full advantage of it. Don't be suspicious if people you hardly know praise you to the skies and offer to do you favours.

Gemini
May 22 - June 21
It may be a pain having to explain yourself every step of the way but it will be worth it in the long-term. The planets make it easy to get close to people who mean a lot to you.

Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Social activities are high on your agenda now and you must make time to have fun, no matter how much work you have got lined up. Don't worry too much about "serious" issues — they're really not that serious at all.

Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
The Sun leaves your birth sign today but you must not slow down or set your sights any lower. The next few weeks will bring new financial opportunities, be ready to act decisively.

Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The Sun moves into your birth sign today and a new solar year gets under way, but don't think you have to start at a mad rush and try to get everything done at once.

Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You have not seen as much of a friend as you would have liked but your paths are destined to cross again over the next few weeks. Why not give them a call and reconnect today?

Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
If you need to talk to an authority figure, approach them today while you feel super confident. The planets indicate they will listen to what you have to say and act in your favour.

Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
As the Sun crosses the career angle of your chart today. you must be more ambitious. The next few weeks will be crucial for those Sags who want to get on in the world. Success is closer now than ever before.

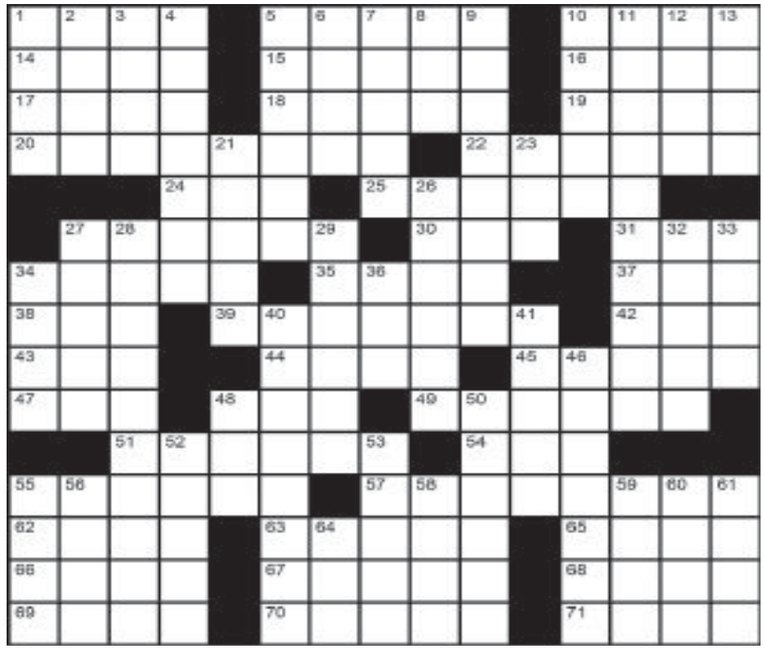
Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
As the Sun moves in your favour today, you won't be in the least bit fazed by the challenges that fate throws at you. On the contrary, you can't wait to get stuck into them, such is your supreme self-belief.

Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
There is nothing to fear but fear itself. With the Sun moving into one of the more sensitive areas of your chart you may need to repeat that mantra at regular intervals. Try not to worry.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Cosmic activity in your opposite sign of Virgo means you are will clash with someone over the next few days. Just because you see life from different angles does not mean you cannot get along. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

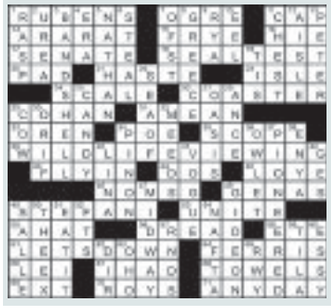
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. __ Kong
5. Not qualified
10. Some aircrafts
14. Downright nasty
15. __ prosequi (Not proceeding, in law)
16. Czech river
17. Ms. Dunham of HBO's "Girls"
18. Fancy instrument
19. City's air pollution
20. Provincial leaders
22. False
24. 'Pepper' add-on (Pizza topping)
25. NYC's __ Island
27. Regatta crafts
30. Humour style
31. Disney song: "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-__"
34. __ and fauna
35. "Not on _ __!" = "No way!"
37. Rambo portrayer, to pals
38. Pants split
39. Saskatchewan's provincial fish
42. Pourboire
43. Gremlin
44. Fool
45. "I Started _ __" by The Bee Gees
47. Last letter, USA-style
48. Inclined
49. Hamilton-born star Mr. Levy
51. House painter's tool
54. Apiece
55. Steamed in corn husks dish
57. Guess Who's "__ Woman"
62. Drop
63. Reserved
65. Detective's find
66. Voice characteristic
67. Nymph of Greek mythology
68. Answer-needer's aid
69. Barely manages, __ out
70. Bird-created structures
71. Chooses

Down
1. Self-__ book
2. Finito
3. "The Whole __ Yards" (2000)
4. Fashion magazine
5. Reveal, as a portrait painting
6. Pinot __ (Wine variety)
7. Dental string
8. Misguided = __-conceived
9. "Heaven Coming Down" band from Windsor, The __ __
10. Canadian figure skating great Ms. Chouinard
11. New Brunswick city
12. Step heavily
13. Palm starch
21. Relative by marriage
23. Pig's pen
26. Pluck eyebrows
27. Mucky matter
28. It flows in NWT and Nunavut, __ River
29. Military greeting
32. Similar
33. Ballyhoo
34. Animator Mr. Freleng
36. Deli request
40. Singing sisters from Canada, Natalie or Nicole
41. Enthusiastic
46. Wrestler/rocker from Winnipeg, Chris __
48. "Never Ever" by __ Saints (Group #40-Down were in)
50. Overturns
52. Hall & __
53. Does garden work
55. Carry
56. "Star Trek" episode, __ Time
58. Vegan's taboo
59. Cut short
60. Uncle's wife
61. Profits
64. "__ you kidding?"

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	6		7			3	1	
1				6		7		9
8				9				
	5	2			1		9	
				2				
	8		5			4	3	
				1				6
6		4		8				3
	1	7			9		5	

Yesterday's Sudoku

7	1	5	8	6	4	3	2	9
3	2	4	9	1	5	8	7	6
8	9	6	2	7	3	4	5	1
5	3	8	4	2	1	6	9	7
2	6	1	7	3	9	5	8	4
9	4	7	5	8	6	2	1	3
6	7	3	1	5	2	9	4	8
4	8	2	6	9	7	1	3	5
1	5	9	3	4	8	7	6	2

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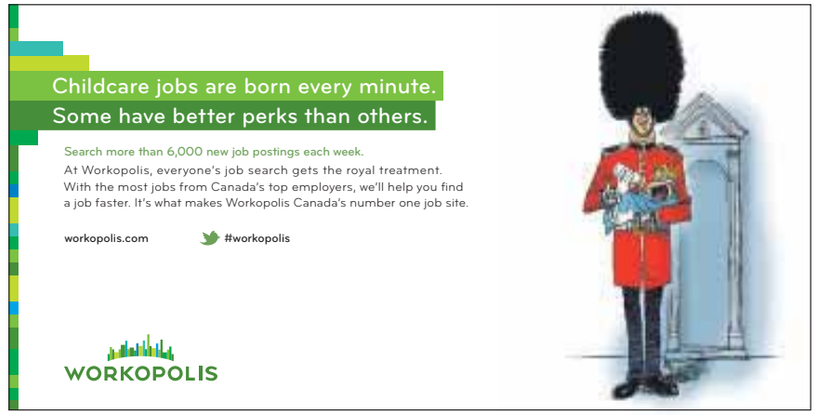
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For the official competition rules, please visit workopolis.com/captionchallenge

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